



**Stephen's Place
Children's Centre**
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**Launching Stephen's Place Children's Centre
A branch of the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP)
offering Child Psychotherapy and Supervised Contact Services**

<Contact_Name>

We hope you can join us at the launch of Stephen's Place Children's Centre. More than just an opening ceremony – this is a free half-day conference on 'Safe Child Contact' encompassing stimulating talks and a drama presentation by Geese Theatre, famed for their interactive work with offenders (see the attached invitation and reply slip).

Stephen's Place is a project of DVIP - an independent voluntary sector project based in Hammersmith, working to increase the safety of children and adults from domestic violence. Since 1992 we have been providing a violence prevention group-work programme for domestic abusers who want to address their behavior. This may be simply because they have become uncomfortable with the damage it's doing to their family and relationships or it may be seen as an obstacle to safe quality contact with their children following family breakdown, as contributing to child protection concerns or have given rise to a criminal conviction. In every case DVIP's support services provide help for the partners or the ex-partners of these men, such as safety-planning sessions, emotional support and group work.

DVIP has been involved in child contact work since 1999. As a member of the Safe Contact Partnership, we set interagency protocols, developed risk assessment tools and made child-focused perpetrator work available to the family courts. The expert risk assessment and intervention work were soon adapted for use in child protection (public law) cases so that, once we started offering fathers' parenting groups in 2004, DVIP was running an **almost** holistic family intervention for domestic violence.

We are very happy to announce that that with the opening of Stephen's Place Children's Centre are now finally be able to offer 'the full works'. Stephen's Place will offer high-vigilance supervised contact, alongside child psychotherapeutic services enabling us to assess and work with children affected by domestic violence and family breakdown.

This centre is named in memory of Stephen Walsh, CAFCASS manager and founder of the Safe Contact Project, who died from cancer two years ago aged 52. It was his tireless focus on children's needs in the face of domestic conflict and violence, coupled with his humor and warmth, that sewed the seeds for Stephen's Place and that continue to inspire and guide us.

We very much hope to see you on March 3rd.
Regards,

Kate Iwi (Children's Services Manager)
and Shelley Mason (Co-ordinator of Stephen's Place Children's Centre).